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Sample Proficiency Standard

The content included in this Sample Proficiency Standard section was drawn from the performance tasks developed as part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's work with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. We gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of Wisconsin educators who participated in the performance assessment development project.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

B. Writing

The performance tasks developed as part of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's work with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research provided the basis for the sample proficiency standard for writing below. We gratefully appreciate and acknowledge the contribution of Wisconsin educators who participated in the performance assessment development project.

CONTENT STANDARD

Students in Wisconsin will write clearly and effectively to share information and knowledge, to influence and persuade, to create and entertain.

SAMPLE TASK

We have spent time discussing the concept of heroism. In small groups, we have examined different views and have considered certain individuals or groups of persons as possible heroes. In addition, we have read several passages describing heroic acts, persons, or situations.

You now have two class periods to write about heroism. You may choose from several different forms of writing, such as poem, narrative, character sketch, news report, or essay. Choose the one that will best allow you to express your understanding of heroism. This paper will *not* be scored according to what you believe or your choice of hero but on how well you write to deliver your message. Think of the members of your class as the audience. Your choice of form and content should be appropriate for the purpose of the writing, to express your understanding of heroism.

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PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- Create or produce writing to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes
- Plan, revise, edit, and publish clear and effective writing
- Understand the function of various forms, structures, and punctuation marks of standard American English and use them appropriately in written communications

SAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK

EXPLANATION OF RATINGS OF STUDENT WORK

Advanced

This writer has a clear sense of delivery of the message in response to the assignment. Although the paper is relatively short, it is well developed and clearly focused. The writer's use of expressions, such as "...his hands grabbed upon empty air, as did his feet," "blazed his way to glory," "some heroes are quiet heroes; others become famous for it" illustrates a grasp of sophisticated stylistic devices. Variation in sentence structure, use of specific example, and mastery of language conventions combine to demonstrate advanced ability to communicate in writing.

Final Draft

There is a young man that illustrates perfectly the two most important qualities of being a hero - courage and determination. Most people in the United States may have heard this man's story, and most of these people may see him as an example for younger children. This man's name is Dan Jansen.

Dan Jansen holds all kinds of world records for speed skating, but there was one goal he couldn't reach: Olympic gold. He tried in Calgary in 1988 and in Albertville in 1992, but his hands grabbed upon empty air, as did his feet.

At Lillehammer in 1994, the silver medal was again denied out of Dan's reach when he slipped in the race he was supposed to win. Disheartened, he went into the race that he was supposed to have only a long shot at. To everybody's surprise and delight, he blazed his way to gold and glory, capturing yet another world record. What a way to get

Dan Jansen knows what it is like to lose. But he kept trying and trying, his courage carrying him through the rocky waters of his life. In the end, his courage and determination finally brought him to his goal.

We all aspire to be heroes someday, to save a life, but heroes aren't all about just saving lives. In my opinion, heroes must have courage and determination to attain their goals. But not every situation will bring out the hero in you. Only certain situations will do that. Some heroes are quiet heroes; others become famous for it, like Dan Jansen. But with courage and determination, everyone can be a hero.

Proficient

The writer captures the reader's attention in the first paragraph and holds the interest throughout the piece. A clear sense of beginning, middle, and end is evident in the organization, and appropriate paragraphing is used. Sentence variety and use of dialogue add to the effectiveness of this piece. The vocabulary includes effective words such as "jolted," "murmured," and "eventually." The few punctuation and usage errors do not detract from the writing. While this writing is clearly proficient, it is not advanced. Greater detail, some word choice changes, and some general revisions could increase the overall delivery of this writing.

Final Draft

Ordinary Person becomes Hero

Mr. [REDACTED] is just an ordinary person. He has a family and a job as a fireman. For six years he has gone through his daily tasks. He works 9⁰⁰ 5⁰⁰ everyday except Sundays. He also works on special call or emergencies. But on the night of May 23, he became a hero.

The night of May 23, Mr. [REDACTED] from [REDACTED], Wisconsin was suddenly jolted out of his bed by a telephone call at 2 a.m. It was an emergency call; someone's house was on fire. Mr. [REDACTED] grabbed his coat and headed to the fire station. There he picked up three fellow workers, jumped on the fire truck, and went to the scene. As he arrived at 103 2nd street, he noticed a blue and white house in flames.

The crowd murmured that [REDACTED] age 7, was still in the house. Mr. [REDACTED] grabbed his gear and went in the house to find her. About 8 minutes later he came out with what seemed to be a lifeless body. But after CPR, [REDACTED] started to cough, then eventually started breathing again.

"I was only doing my job," said Mr. [REDACTED], "I get payed to do this."

Others say he was a true hero. "He was brave to go into the burning house and risk his life," replied an attending neighbor.

"He is a man of courage and always ready to help out people in their time of need," said Mrs. [REDACTED] mother of [REDACTED]

They Heroes are brave, helpful people. They do their job and do it well. They need not be famous, but ordinary people.

Basic

The writer has a sense of order with an introduction and logical progression of story. Some transitions are used and words such as “collide,” “elderly,” and “dispatch” add to the overall effect of the writing. Use of dialogue is attempted near the end. While the writer demonstrates understanding of composition, the lack of paragraphing, the errors in punctuation and usage, and the general difficulty in readability detract from the delivery of the message. Improvement in these areas is needed to assist this piece in its overall effectiveness.

Final Draft

The Car Accident

It was a warm summer evening and my whole family was at my babysitters. I was only four years old at the time. We were all on the porch when we heard a loud crash. We went on to see what it was and when we saw that two cars had collided right on the corner of her block which was right in front of her house. We all ran to see what was the matter and we saw that an elderly couple and a young adult had collided. The elderly couple must have been coming back from church that night by the way they were dressed. When my mom saw the scene and there was blood everywhere she almost fainted. My dad having to take first aid and CPR twice a year for his work knew what to do but not all. When I saw the old man just covered with blood I ran to the house and called 911. The lady that answered asked me what the problem was and I told her that two cars had collided together. She asked me if

any of them were moving and I told her that I didn't know because fairly soon it was a split second. She told me that she was going to dispatch an ambulance and it will be there in a couple of minutes. When I went back outside, there were people just standing around and watching and I couldn't figure out why they were just standing around. I ran to my dad and asked if he needed anything and he told me to go get some blankets from the truck. When I got back, there was a fireman by the name of [redacted] that lived up the block and he laid down in the back of the ambulance but they said that help was on the way. When the ambulance took the people away [redacted] asked us who called 911 and I said I did. He said to me, "If you know to call them and I said that I was in court and they always told us that when you see a bad accident to call 911. He said, "So if you wouldn't have called at the time that if the other people wouldn't have died, you're a hero for saving their lives."

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Minimal

Although the writer addresses the writing assignment and topic, the paper lacks development of thought and details. The language is simplistic and does not capture the interest of the reader. Sentences are simple and without some needed punctuation. Overall, this writing does not deliver its message successfully.

Final Draft

I think heroes should have special powers, that's why my hero is Superman. He has saved many many many lives. One life he saved was that of one of his friends Lois Lane. One day he saved her from getting hit by a bus. And that's why he is my hero.

THE
END
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